USMC LIAISON IN SOUTHWEST ASIA: TRADITIONAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES REVISITED

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USMC LIAISON IN SOUTHWEST ASIA: TRADITIONAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES REVISITED

Outline

Thesis: Southwest Asia highlighted traditional strengths and weaknesses in USMC liaison operations, and the weaknesses, in particular, require corrective action. Current Marine Corps initiatives which address those deficiencies represent a good start, but overall they can be improved upon.

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USMC LIAISON IN SOUTHWEST ASIA:

TRADITIONAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES REVISITED

A key ingredient to any successful joint or combined military operation is adequate liaison. What is liaison? For the purpose of this discussion, it is the contact or inter-communication maintained between elements of military forces to insure mutual understanding and unity of purpose and action.(41:55) When placed in this context, liaison may appear to be a relatively modern concept. However, it has been exercised (in one form or another) for hundreds of years. In fact, many of the world's greatest military leaders attribute their success, in part to the effective use of liaison personnel. One of the premier figures in American military history, General Robert E. Lee, summed-up their importance in the following manner: "If you can fill these [liaison] positions with proper officers... you might hope to have the finest army in the world."(14:1)

The value of liaison certainly hasn't been lost on the leadership of the United States Marine Corps. Throughout the Corps' history, enlisted men and officers alike have been selected to serve as the "eyes" of their commanders. During modern conflicts (post World War II), liaison teams have been used to good advantage. Despite a long list of Marine Corps successes, there have been many instances when liaison operations have fallen short of the mark, or have

been ignored entirely. In a sense, these operations collectively demonstrated the traditional strengths and weaknesses of Marine Corps liaison. This was particularly true in the recent Persian Gulf conflict. Operations Desert Shield and Storm proved once and for all that the Marine Corps needs to correct long-standing liaison problem areas.

We will briefly examine Marine Corps liaison operations in Southwest Asia (SWA) then provide a subjective assessment which illustrates the traditional strengths and weaknesses of liaison mentioned above. The underlying purpose of this paper, however, is to identify the corrective actions which Headquarters Marine Corps is undertaking to preclude liaison-related problems in the future and to recommend actions which might facilitate the implementation of the various initiatives, as well as enhance their overall effectiveness.

USMC LIAISON IN SOUTHWEST ASIA

The primary reason for concentrating on SWA is that Desert Shield and Storm are the most recent examples of a Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) operating in a large scale joint and combined conflict. Despite its short duration, the war has had a profound impact upon the Marine Corps. In short, Southwest Asia has grabbed the attention of the

Corps' policy-makers. For that reason alone, it represents an ideal case study for liaison.

Pre-Desert Shield

Prior to deploying to the Persian Gulf, the First Marine Expeditionary Force's (I MEF) experience in liaison was very similar to that of other Fleet Marine Force (FMF) units. The MEF had utilized liaison personnel to a limited extent during training exercises. More often than not though, liaison had received cursory attention. Past experience of key individuals and after-action reports served as primary sources for liaison planning. As far as can be discerned, detailed standing operating procedures (SOP) for liaison did not exist within I MEF, or anywhere else in the Marine Corps for that matter, prior to August of 1990. Granted, various Marine Corps publications do address the topic of liaison. Two such examples are FMFM-3, Command and Staff Action and FMFM-4, Combat Service Support. But, although these manuals provide some interesting insights, they are not comprehensive. As a result, the Marine Corps, and more specifically I MEF, entered Operation Desert Shield lacking liaison doctrine for the joint environment.

Desert Shield

In August 1990, Marine Forces made preparations to

execute Desert Shield. Prior to the actual deployment phase, I MEF sent its operations officer (G-3) to the Central Command (CENTCOM) headquarters in Tampa, Florida. As the designated Marine component (MARCENT), I MEF considered timely interface with CENTCOM absolutely essential. For all practical purposes, this was the first and most important liaison effort undertaken prior to Marines arriving in Saudi Arabia. Having a representative in Tampa accomplished two important tasks. First, Marine Corps concerns were presented directly to the Commander-in-Chief (CINC) and his staff. Moreover, the unique capabilities and inherent limitations of Marine forces were presented to CENTCOM by a trusted subordinate of I MEF's commanding general, LtGen Walter Boomer. Second, vital information was relayed back to I MEF in Camp Pendleton, Ca. As a result, the general and his staff were kept appraised of CENTCOM requirements and where the operation was going. (16)

Other examples of USMC liaison during the initial phases of Desert Shield span a wide range of activities and organizations. Among the more senior units was Headquarters, Fleet Marine Force Europe, Designate (FMFEUR). Despite its small size, FMFEUR dispatched a number of liaison teams to key airheads throughout Europe. The purpose of these teams was to facilitate the movement of

USMC aircraft, personnel, and critical equipment destined for SWA. FMFEUR teams were particularly valuable in heading off problems before they occurred. Collectively, they insured the steady flow of materials eastward.(34)

Despite being far removed from the action, III MEF (located in Okinawa, Japan) indirectly contributed to the liaison effort. In August 1990, a small team of officers and enlisted Marines was sent by III MEF to the Seventh Fleet staff, located aboard USS Blue Ridge (LCC 19). Since Commander, Seventh Fleet, had been designated CENTCOM's Naval Force Commander (NAVCENT), this team was intended to beef-up the Marine presence on his staff. Working directly for the Fleet Marine Officer, its members helped educate their Navy counterparts on USMC force structure, logistics, amphibious planning, and other relevant issues. (22)

At the lower levels, liaison elements were equally active. An excellent example involves the 7th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (7th MEB). During the operation's initial phases, the MEB relied heavily upon an organization related to MPS operations -- the Survey, Liaison, and Reconnaissance Party (SLRP). Working under the purview of a MEB advance party, the SLRP attempted to make inroads into the host nation before MPS shipping arrived in Saudi ports. Unfortunately, the SLRP lacked self-sufficiency in manning, motor vehicle assets, etc. These shortages degraded the

SLRP's overall effectiveness, which in turn had a profound effect upon the entire off-load. (33)

When the build-up of forces in SWA got into full swing, the requirements for liaison rose exponentially. As was seen in the pre-deployment phase, liaison was conducted across the spectrum. At the tactical level, important contacts were initiated between Marine forces and allied units. Of particular note were the efforts of the Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO). French, British and coalition units were provided with in-depth training in USMC supporting arms procedures and related topics.(24) In the grander scheme, ANGLICO's contributions may have been overshadowed somewhat. Its true impact was not fully realized until Desert Storm began some months later.

At the component level, the liaison system was judged to be less satisfactory. The theater had expanded so rapidly that MARCENT's staff was overwhelmed.(7:56) Internally, the compositing process preoccupied planners. Developing an efficient command structure for units which had come from all over the Marine Corps represented a distinct challenge. Moreover, the CINC had since established his headquarters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (16 AUG'90). This was some distance from MARCENT, located in the port of Al Jubail, SA. Little if any USMC representation existed in Riyadh. The absence of staff liaison was even more pronounced at the various

component headquarters. Unlike MARCENT, CENTAF (U.S. Air Force) and ARCENT (U.S. Army), had elected to collocate with CENTCOM in Riyadh. Naturally this simplified their liaison requirements dramatically. Besides MARCENT, the only other component command more geographically isolated was NAVCENT (located in Manama, Bahrain).

A Defense Intelligence Agency assessment of CINCCENT's (CENTCOM) intelligence apparatus reinforced the notion that MARCENT liaison operations were inadequate. Briefly stated, the study identified a shortage of 150 USMC intelligence personnel in-theater. Although steps were taken to close the personnel gap, DIA's study aptly stated one of MARCENT's major problems: too few people to satisfy an overwhelming number of requirements. The shortage of intelligence personnel limited MARCENT's ability to send liaison teams to external commands.(47) Similar difficulties were encountered in virtually every other staff section.

The lack of a coordinated MARCENT effort or comprehensive liaison plan further compounded this problem. Each staff section reacted differently and independently to liaison requirements. A common factor in their efforts, though, is they all tasked the C-6 (Communications-Information Systems) section, in one way or another, with support requirements. This stretched the component's resources to the limit. Surprisingly, most of the staff's

communication needs were satisfied. Ultimately, the steady drain of equipment decreased the G-6's flexibility in responding to system outages and additional requirements. Taking equipment "out-of-hide" clearly placed MARCENT's C3 system in a precarious situation.(16)

Additional problems were caused by the ad-hoc nature of USMC liaison. In many cases, liaison teams were inadequately staffed to do the job at hand. More importantly, their members were often too junior to effectively interface with contemporaries at the host commands. Furthermore, insufficient mission-related guidance was issued by the various staff sections.(16) These inconsistencies sent conflicting signals to external commands. For example, in October CENTCOM requested that MARCENT send representatives to a week-long planning conference. Since the purpose of the conference was to formulate a CENTCOM campaign plan, it had particular relevance to MARCENT. MARCENT responded by sending one major for a two-day period! BGen Richard Neil, USMC, (CENTCOM, Deputy J-3) implied that the lack of adequate representation at that meeting may have hurt MARCENT in the long run -- operationally, and in the way external commands viewed them.(38) Logistical liaison was often treated in a similar fashion. In one case, a single major was sent to ARCENT to coordinate all Army-USMC logistical matters.(11) These examples demonstrate

under-manning to an extreme.

The weaknesses of MARCENT liaison were recognized by LtGen Boomer fairly early. Because of the manning shortages discussed earlier, however, his options were limited. Despite these constraints, positive steps were eventually taken. For instance, BGen J.A. Brabham Jr. and several officers were sent to Riyadh to represent MARCENT. A small but capable team, headed by Col. Joseph Robbin, was dispatched to CENTAF. One of the true successes of the SWA experience, Col. Robbin's team coordinated directly with the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC). He insured that Marine representatives flew aboard AWACS and the ABCCC. MARCENT also requested additional personnel from Headquarters, Marine Corps (codes MMOA/MMOE). Unfortunately, the manpower management system (MMS) proved too unresponsive to meet MARCENT's needs.(47) At one point, the Commandant of the Marine Corps became personally involved. General Gray actually offered the entire II MEF staff to LtGen Boomer. He proposed that they could function as the MARCENT component staff in Riyadh, thereby freeing I MEF to "fight the war." For reasons unknown, the offer was rejected by LtGen Boomer.(47)

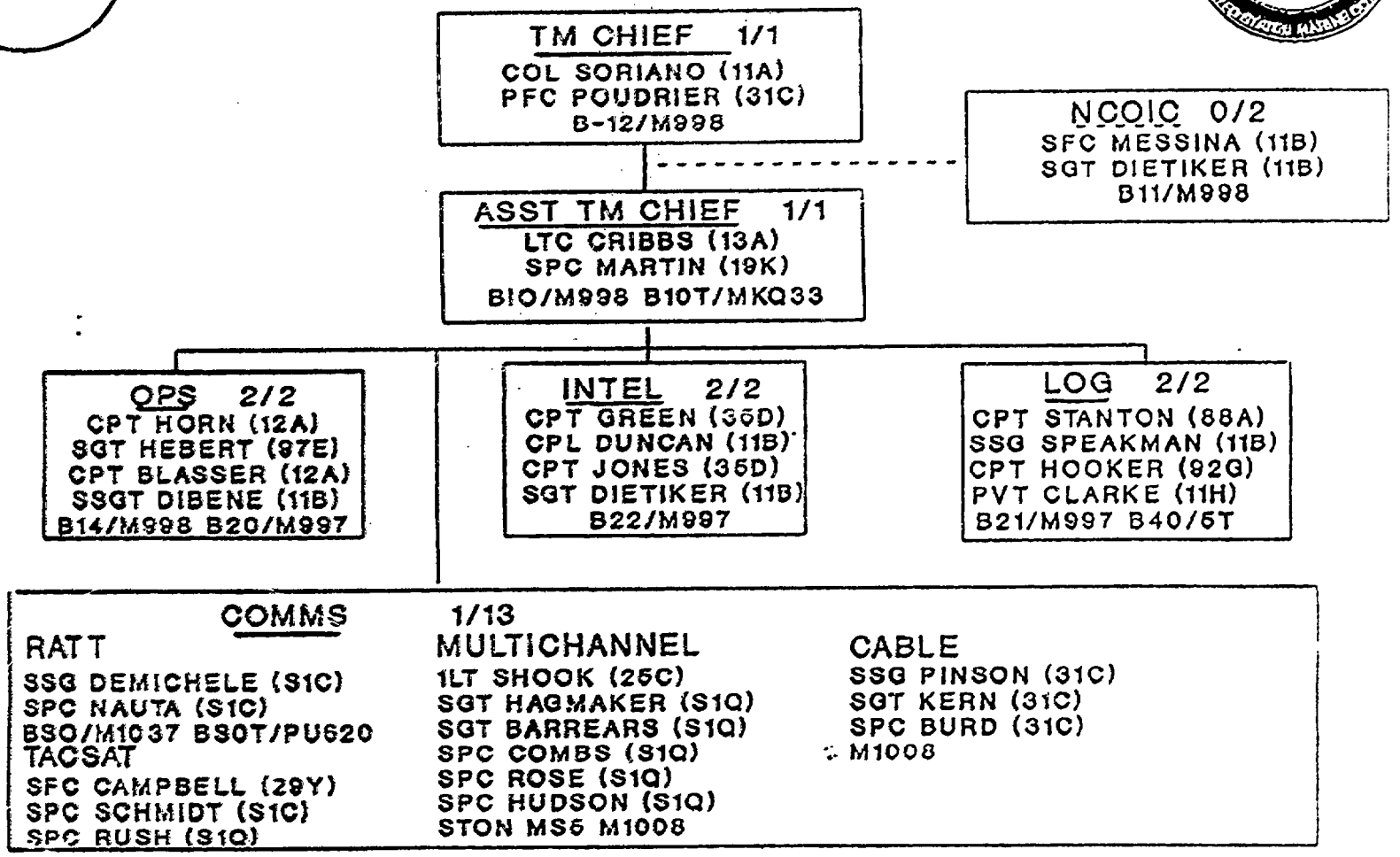
From this discussion, it may seem that MARCENT alone suffered from inadequate liaison. Actually, many of the other services had similar difficulties. They also lacked

liaison doctrine. Therefore, each component responded to liaison challenges differently. ARCENT's solution, in particular, is worth mentioning. Based on a requirement for liaison at MARCENT, Army planners approached the problem methodically. Within weeks, a robust and self-sufficient team headed by the Executive Assistant for the Chief of Staff of the Army arrived at MARCENT's doorstep.(16) Figure 2 outlines the specific structure of what came to be known as the Battlefield Coordination Element (BCE). The BCE had its own communication equipment, tentage, and motor vehicle assets; in short, everything it needed to carry out its mission.(16) Most impressed with the BCE concept was the Commandant of the Marine Corps. During one of his last visits to Saudi before Desert Storm began, Gen Gray personally visited the BCE at MARCENT and spoke with its members. Soon after his return to CONUS, preparations were made to form a pool of personnel for MARCENT's use.

During the second week of January 1991, a group of approximately 200 Marine officers and enlisted personnel arrived in theater. Of that number, at least four were flag officers. Gathered mainly from CONUS commands, many of these Marines were considered to be at the top of their respective occupational specialties. Although the majority filtered into the MARCENT staff structure, selected members served as liaison officers (LNO) at the component or CINC

A

LIAISON TEAM BRAVO
ORGANIZATION



Source: MAGFT Instruction Team

Figure 1
12-14a

level. A smaller number were organized into mini-staffs. Headed by general officers, they were sent to perceived trouble areas within the AOR. BGen Van Riper and a contingent of personnel were sent to CENTCOM to augment the cell already in place. A MARCENT Forward staff was formed under the cognizance of MGen J.J. Sheehan. Composed of approximately 25 Marines, this staff was dispatched to Bahrain and quickly embarked on NAVCENT's flagship.(22)

Desert Storm

Final adjustments to MARCENT's liaison system were made in the closing days of Desert Shield. When 2nd Marine Division arrived in the AOR, internal (cross-division) liaison representatives were exchanged.(31) Additional liaison personnel were also sent to, and received from, various supporting/attached commands. All told, the Marine Corps had been allowed six months of preparation before hostilities erupted.

By the 16th of January, the system which had been so difficult to build was largely in place. Only minor adjustments were made during Desert Storm. If anything, existing procedures and relationships were refined. The most striking liaison during this period was conducted by the officers and teams assigned to coalition forces.(35) Their tireless efforts permitted timely and effective

communications between Marine and coalition units. Liaison personnel at the component/CINC level were equally productive. They represented Marine Corps interests in a commendable manner.

Post-Desert Storm

Post-Desert Storm liaison for all practical purposes revolved around re-deployment (retrograde). In many ways, liaison at this stage was markedly different than that of the proceeding periods. External agencies, vice MARCENT, played leading roles. For instance, FMFPAC took responsibility for the backload of USMC personnel and equipment.(11) Coordinating with the U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) and Military Sealift Command (MSC) figured prominently in this effort. Army movement control teams directed the movement of equipment into the various ports. In short, liaison operations during the retrograde were more mission specific, covering a narrower spectrum. Residual MARCENT units concentrated mainly on civil affairs and coordinating with the movement/control activities mentioned above. For all practical purposes, this period marked the end of USMC liaison operations associated with Operations Desert Shield and Storm.

ASSESSMENT

How effective, in the final analysis, was Marine Corps liaison during the Persian Gulf Crisis? To answer this question in an unbiased fashion, is challenging; after all, we did win the war. Cast in that light, it can be said that Marine Corps liaison in SWA was effective. However, the importance of this question deserves a more complete answer. The following assessment will attempt to provide that answer, if in a limited fashion. In order to simplify their presentation, comments have been grouped under two general sub-headings: positive aspects and negative aspects.

Positive Aspects

There were a number of positive aspects about USMC liaison in SWA. In a sense, they represented the traditional strengths alluded to in the introduction. Probably the most familiar of these is doing more with less. Throughout the Gulf crisis, Marine Forces lacked the necessary personnel to satisfactorily meet liaison requirements.(6:2) This meant that liaison officers (LNOs) had to work extraordinarily hard to accomplish their missions. Many had to cover multiple areas simply because no one else was assigned (remember the single major assigned to ARCENT for logistical coordination?). Additionally,

face-to-face liaison was the norm rather than the exception. Marine Corps staff officers rarely passed up opportunities to meet with their counterparts at other headquarters. Even LtGen Boomer made frequent trips to visit the CINC and the other component commanders.

Yet another favorable aspect of USMC liaison was flexibility. Marine forces, as a whole, demonstrated the ability to adjust rapidly to changing liaison requirements. In the same vein, Marine Corps liaison remained responsive throughout. An old adage states that Marine colonels are equal to generals in the Air Force or Army. Although it's meant to be a humorous jab at our sister services, USMC planners apparently took it literally. Field grade officers were often tasked with interfacing directly with flag officers from the other services. Even more common were Marine company grades dealing one-on-one with much more senior officers. Although these officers were outranked, their performance was stellar. Many Marine Corps successes in SWA can be linked directly to their selfless devotion to duty.

Probably the best endorsement of USMC liaison in the Gulf comes from the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Joint Pub 1 (Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces). They cite the various liaison teams employed by MARCENT as "ample and effective" and "serving to keep communications constant and effective."

Negative Aspects

Despite the many successes, there were also a number of liaison problems areas in SWA. Many of these shortcomings have been alluded to already. In most cases, they were lessons re-learned, or traditional USMC liaison weaknesses. Foremost among these was the absence of doctrine. Doctrine provides a foundation or jump-off point for planners. Furthermore, it provides standardization, or common ground. Without doctrine, it is difficult to conduct complicated operations such as liaison. The lack of doctrine spawned the ad-hoc approach to liaison adopted by many USMC units.(46:57) With no published guidelines to follow, they solved the liaison equation in drastically different ways. The net result was sheer wastefulness and varying degrees of success. Proof positive was MARCENT's initial attempts at external liaison. Disjointed staff actions met the immediate needs of separate offices, but did they benefit MARCENT as a whole? The answer in most cases was no. Over the past forty-five years (if not longer), the Marine Corps has lacked force-wide procedures for liaison. Desert Shield and Storm proved once and for all that the Marine Corps can't operate efficiently without doctrine. The increasingly joint nature of warfare demands it.

Inextricably linked to the absence of doctrine was the

shortage of suitable liaison personnel. This represented a serious problem for MARCENT. How does this relate to doctrine? As stated earlier, doctrine provides the jump-off point for planners. Had there been a "template" for joint liaison requirements, MEF planners could have requested personnel augmentation prior to deploying to the Gulf. Granted, MARCENT did request additional personnel from Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC). It was noted that MMS could not meet the demand. To a certain degree, this was due to internal MMS problems. In a larger sense though, HQMC suffered from the same problems as MARCENT. The templating of liaison billets would have identified augmentation requirements up-front. Under the current system and without doctrinal guidelines, an organization as large as HQMC can't be expected to react instantaneously to large-scale personnel requests. More simply stated, there needs to be a plan established before the execution phase.

Identifying spare bodies doesn't solve the problem completely. Assigned personnel must be suitable for liaison assignments. That is, liaison personnel must have an acceptable level of experience, training, and in some cases the rank to satisfactorily accomplish the mission. Southwest Asia produced many examples of planners ignoring these principles entirely. Historical precedents show selecting liaison personnel has always been a problem for

the Marine Corps. During training exercises, it's been customary to send the most junior officers in a unit to fill liaison billets. Even more common is the practice of assigning weak officers to liaison jobs simply to get rid of them.(40:1-2) The natural tendency of commanders to hang on to their proven performers fuels this problem. Therefore in SWA we saw a perfect example of the Marine Corps following the age-old principle of fighting as it had trained. Marine planners simply employed liaison personnel the way they had done in peacetime.

The importance of rank in dealing with our sister services cannot be ignored either. Early USMC liaison planning failed to take this into consideration. Despite the willingness or ability of USMC LNOs to do a good job, they were often too junior to function on an equal basis at CENTCOM and the other components. The influx of USMC flag officers in the latter stages of Desert Shield, lends credence to this observation.

Another problem area was that liaison teams often lacked sufficient equipment to accomplish their missions. Obviously we're talking about more here than just radios and telephones. For the purpose of this discussion though, we will limit ourselves to communication-electronic (C/E) equipment. It has been inferred that the MARCENT G-6 was able to meet the stated needs for liaison cells (given

adequate lead-time).(2:2) The underlying problem was that liaison teams (and the staff sections which sponsored them) failed to articulate their communication requirements. That is a diplomatic way of saying they didn't know what was needed to do the job. As a result, many liaison teams arrived at the host commands somewhat less than self-sufficient.(3)

Once again, the absence of liaison SOPs (doctrine) created a vacuum of inexperience. The lack of a MARCENT liaison strategy caused an endless tide of "new" communication requirements. The G-6 section did an admirable job of keeping up with the demand. Would they have been able to so without the augmentation of external agencies? The bottom-line once again is that there has to be a plan. Moreover, liaison teams need to be self-sufficient in operators and equipment. Tables of equipment should coincide with their assigned mission(s). The perfect model of self-sufficiency was ARCENT's BCE.

USMC INITIATIVES

The proceeding assessment of Marine Corps liaison operations may seem rather gloomy. It's not intended to take anything away from the Marines who carried out liaison duties. Their efforts were largely successful, and

genuinely appreciated. Unfortunately, liaison problems still exist. In the wake of previous conflicts, liaison shortcomings were simply brushed under the carpet. Not so with Operations Desert Shield and Storm. A number of changes are taking place within the Marine Corps today. Most are in reaction to a shrinking defense budget. Others, though, are aimed at making the Corps a more viable force in the future by correcting long-standing problem areas like liaison.

First, service-wide awareness of joint operations has spawned a renewed interest in liaison. As a result, many Marine Corps commands are re-thinking the way they have conducted liaison in the past. Training for staff officers has shifted away from its traditional focus on Marine Corps issues. In regards to liaison, this has significant implications.

In conjunction with increased awareness, the Marine Corps has taken active steps to write the doctrine which has been needed for so long. FMFM-2, MAGTF Operations, is the principal document which addresses liaison in the joint environment. Although still in its draft version, FMFM-2 provides an in-depth discussion of liaison planning, employment, and other related topics. More specifically, it outlines the structure of three different types (levels) of liaison elements. A description of the various operational

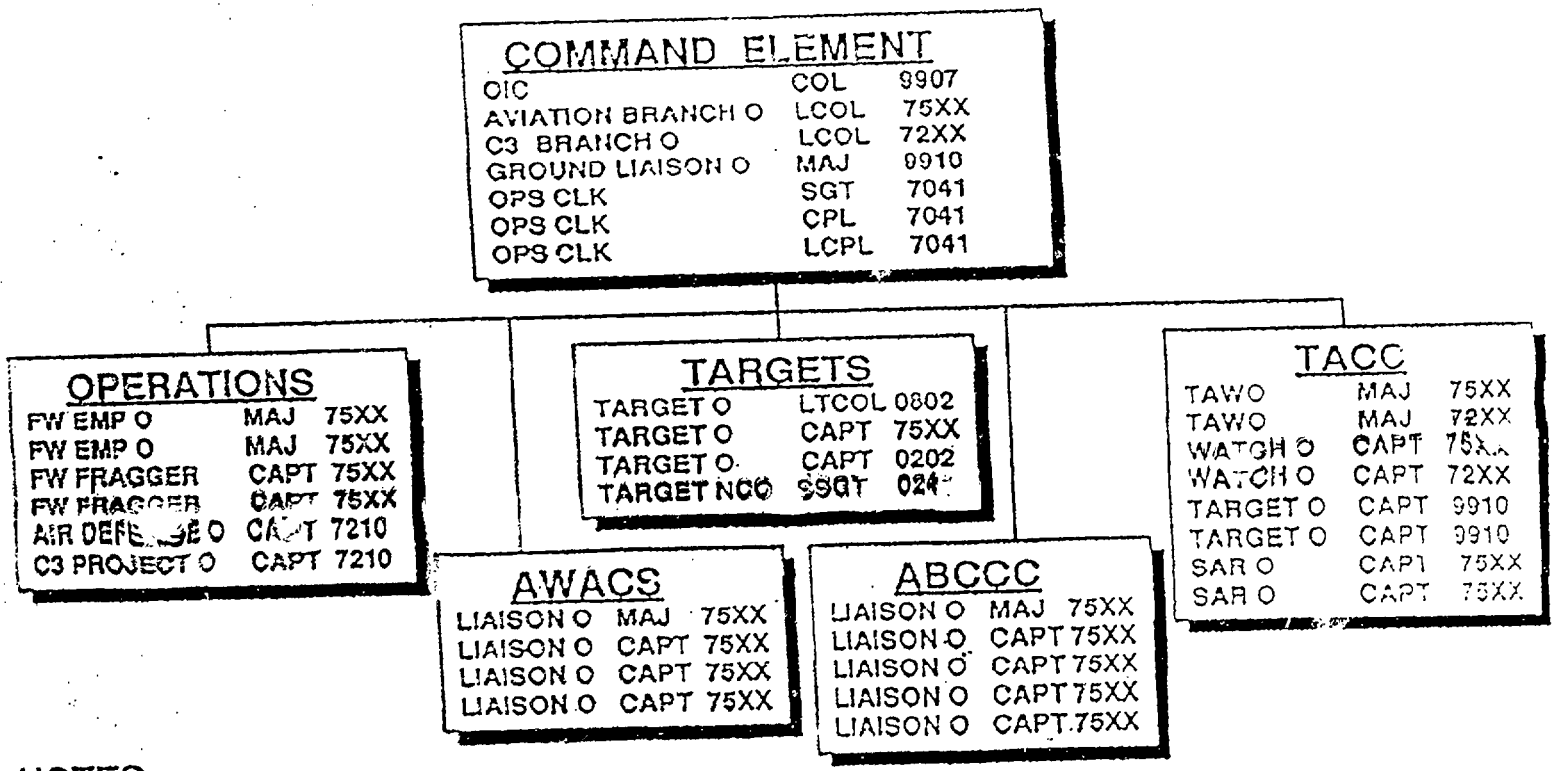
scenarios where each type might be employed is presented in detail (See Appendix A). Above everything else, FMFM-2 articulates the value of liaison to commanders. By implementing the guidelines found therein, a firm foundation for liaison operations can be established.

Integral to doctrine development was the formulation of the MAGTF Instruction Team (MIT) at MCCDC Quantico. The team's primary mission is to educate FMF staffs in MAGTF doctrine. Not surprisingly, FMFM-2 was drafted by the MIT. In years to come, the MIT will help promote the joint awareness discussed earlier, as well as take the lead in preparing comprehensive doctrine for the Marine Corps as a whole. The team continues to work on unresolved liaison issues or the refinement of existing policies. For example, the MIT recently proposed that MAGTF coordination elements be created for interfacing with the JFACC (Figure 2). Creative ideas such as this demonstrate the usefulness of organizations like the MIT. Perhaps USMC "brain trusts" of this type will insure that Marine forces are better prepared to operate on the joint battlefields of the future.

In a climate of force reductions and budget cut-backs, the Marine Corps is also coming to grips with personnel and equipment shortages. In the fall of 1991, a planning group headed by MGen Charles C. Krulak prepared a strategy for restructuring the Marine Corps to achieve a force ceiling of

JFACC MARINE LIAISON T/O

(MAGTF COORDINATION ELEMENT)



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5. ALL OF THE ABOVE OFFICERS NEED TO BE SELECTED BASED ON THEIR TACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF JOINT OPERATIONS.

Source: MAGTF Instruction Team

Figure 2
12-24a

approximately 159,000 personnel. An integral part of this plan includes a unique system for augmenting FMF (MEF and above) staffs during wartime. Simply put, battle rosters will be prepared for selected FMF headquarters. These rosters will reflect the personnel augmentation required for operations in the joint arena. Included in these rosters are specific line numbers for liaison personnel. By utilizing this battle roster system, a MEF headquarters, for example will be able to quickly relay personnel augmentation requirements to its Force headquarters (a notional battle roster for MEF command elements is included as Appendix B). The staff responsibility (MEF level and above) for coordinating liaison matters will rest with the plans section or G-5. Unresolved at this point is where the personnel augmentees will come from. (3)

Tentative plans have also been laid for meeting communication personnel and equipment shortages. The solution revolves around restructuring specific FMF units. At the center is a proposal for enlarging the Corps' communication battalions. Recently submitted to Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) for review, it will increase the three active duty communication battalions in both personnel and equipment. The largest two will reside on the East and West coasts respectively (8th and 9th Communication Battalions). These "super communication

units" will be capable of supporting the C3 requirements of a deployed MEF and MARFOR component headquarters.(39:1) This blanket tasking also includes the personnel and equipment necessary for fielding liaison elements (levels 1-3 simultaneously). At this time, it is unclear whether the plan outlined above will be approved by HQMC. Naturally, budget constraints and manning reductions will figure prominently in the final decision.

In a nutshell this is what the Marine Corps is doing to correct traditional liaison shortcomings. In just under one year, quite a bit has been accomplished. In fact, more has been done in the past 10 months than was accomplished over the past forty-five years!

GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

The initiatives discussed above certainly are encouraging. It would seem that HQMC is determined to correct long-standing problems areas. With that said, will the initiatives be successful? Do they go far enough? Can they be improved upon? Only time will tell regarding the first question. As for the last two, our research leads us to believe that the initiatives do not go far enough, and that they can be improved upon. Therefore, we submit the following recommendations which address the general areas of

doctrine, personnel, training, and equipment.

Doctrine

The most significant USMC initiative discussed is the formulation of liaison doctrine. While FMFM-2 represents a step in the right direction, there still is room for improvement. We contend that more specific guidelines need to be established at the MEF and Force Headquarters (MARFOR component) level. What is needed is a service-wide blueprint for liaison which complements the general guidelines found in FMFM-2. Our rationale for this recommendation is rather simple. All too often in the Marine Corps, there is a lack of standardization between units on the East Coast, West Coast, and Okinawa. This lack of standardization caused a host of interoperability problems in Saudi Arabia. The Marine Corps can ill afford problems of this kind when it comes to liaison. Impending cut-backs in personnel and equipment will demand the efficient use of existing assets. In order to meet global taskings, the Marine Corps will undoubtedly be forced to cross-attach units as was done in SWA. Therefore, standardization is absolutely essential.

We believe Tri-MEF and Force SOPs could satisfy service-wide requirements for the most part. Identifying the specific contents of these SOPs is well beyond the scope

of this paper. However, two key ingredients should be detailed procedures and inherent flexibility. In this sense, flexibility means that commanders aren't restricted by the SOPs' terms, and that the procedures themselves are applicable to a variety of situations. Moreover, the SOPs should meet the collective needs of the units who subscribe to them.

One last note on doctrine and standard operating procedures: unless doctrine is adhered to, unless SOPs are enforced, improvements in liaison will never be achieved. It will remain a command responsibility to insure that the guidelines contained in FMFM-2 and SOPs are followed.

PERSONNEL

Headquarters Marine Corps' solution for liaison personnel shortages also needs some fine tuning. As was pointed out, the major failing of the battle roster system is that it doesn't identify where the additional personnel will come from. Once again, the realities of manpower reductions must be taken into consideration. No doubt, Headquarters Marine Corps is currently wrestling with this issue. The standard answer from MCCDC is that augmentees will come from non-FMF units or the reserves. This may very well be true. Without a definitive plan, though, how can we be sure? Doctrine in itself isn't worth the paper it is

written on if there are not sufficient or qualified personnel to implement it.

In our estimate, there are three possible sources for liaison augmentees: the reserves, the support establishment or non-FMF, and the FMF itself. Let's look at the reserves first. Of the various categories of reservists, we believe members of the Selective Marine Corps Reserve (SMCR), and the Full-Time Support (FTS) program have the greatest potential for use. Without going into a detailed discussion of each category, some general comments should be made. Under the current system, mobilizing the SMCR (or elements thereof) requires Presidential approval. Prior to the Gulf crisis, this was an uncommon occurrence. However, SWA radically changed the traditional role and overall image of the SMCR. In fact, current legislation has been proposed which would allow for the activation of reservists in this category up to 180 days without National Command Authority (NCA). Whatever the outcome, the SMCR contains a ready pool of potential augmentees.

FTS reservists may have a similar utility. The most attractive attribute of FTS personnel is that they're full-time reservists serving on active duty. Thus, they fill critical billets, but aren't included in the active duty force totals. Additionally, FTS personnel are screened and selected to fill specific line numbers within the

regular establishment. Potential drawbacks to FTS are the high turnover rate between billet holders, and the limited manner in which FTS Marines can be employed outside of their primary assignments.(48)

No great mystery surrounds the use of FMF and non-FMF Marines as liaison augmentees. As described earlier, cross-attachment between FMF units and drawing personnel from non-FMF commands was frequently done in SWA. The best example of augmentation was the 200 plus officers and enlisted who arrived in Saudi just before the war began. Coincidently, a large number of these Marines were stationed at the Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Quantico, VA.

Therein lies a potential source for augmentees. We believe personnel assigned to the various MCCDC commands, including the schools, are ideal candidates for liaison augmentation. Generally speaking, Marines undergoing professional military education (PME) or those assigned to the myriad of branches (Warfighting Center, Marine Corps University, etc.), have a working knowledge of MAGTF doctrine. Perhaps even MAGTF Integration Team members could be called upon to reinforce the staff of a deployed MEF. Although other non-FMF commands can provide augmentees, MCCDC appears to be the most lucrative. Equally qualified personnel can also be found in FMF units which aren't

scheduled to participate in the same exercise or contingency. The best option in this case is obtaining personnel from like units to augment deployed headquarters, i.e., augmenting the G-3 section of I MEF (deployed) with an operations officer from II MEF.

Now that the sources for excess personnel have been identified, a system for managing augmentee/liaison assignments is required. The Manpower Directorate of Headquarters Marine Corps should take the lead in designing and operating such a system. In reality, its foundation already exists -- the MMS. By integrating the battle rosters of FMF commands with the MMS, HQMC should be able to identify and assign personnel in a timely manner. Key to this recommendation is that personnel in the aforementioned pools be earmarked for augmentation assignments upon joining their respective commands.

Perhaps a practical example of this notional system is in order. Captain Smith, 0202/USMC, joins the MIT at Quantico, VA. His primary duty is Intelligence staff officer. He is also assigned the additional duty of Joint Intelligence LNO/MEF Intelligence Augmentee. Within weeks, I MEF receives a warning order to deploy to Panama. The MEF in turn, requests battle roster augmentation from HQMC (via FMFPAC). Utilizing the MMS, HQMC identifies Capt Smith as a potential augmentee for I MEF. Capt Smith's command (MCCDC)

is notified that in 20 days, he must report to I MEF. Simultaneously, HQMC notifies Capt Jones, 0202/USMCR (member of the SMCR), that he must report to.CG, MCCDC to fill a vacancy on the MIT staff. Understandably, this an oversimplified example. However, it illustrates the value of an automated augmentation system. In our example, two critical billets were filled in a rapid and efficient manner. More importantly, a suitable liaison officer/staff augmentee was provided to the deploying MEF. Whatever form the system ultimately takes, it must be comprehensive as well as responsive.

TRAINING

An area closely related to personnel is training. In a previous section we referred to the suitability of liaison personnel. In most cases, the success of a liaison team is directly proportional to the knowledge, training, and experience of its members. Currently, no formal curriculum for training liaison personnel exists within DOD. Although a number of service schools touch upon liaison principles, few, if any, address it in a detailed manner. As a result, we think a liaison training package needs to be developed for internal Marine Corps use. Ideally, a course of short duration could be established, which presents this package to personnel assigned the additional duties (ADDU) of

liaison/ staff augmentee. Upon completing the course, graduates would have an entry made (via MMS) in their master service records indicating "ADDU training completed." Very possibly, this course could be taught by the MIT or a force-level mobile training team (MTT). Incorporating it into the formal schools system is yet another possibility. Training of this sort could be enhanced by allowing these same personnel to carry out additional duties during training exercises; in other words, FMF units implementing battle rosters to meet personnel shortages.

Equipment

Last on our list of recommendations is communications equipment. Based upon the current initiatives, we believe communication battalions are being looked upon as the panacea for all of the Corps' C3 ills. Granted, if the communication battalions are restructured in the manner discussed, they will be capable of supporting expanded taskings. In light of the current political environment, though, is it prudent to bet everything on the approval of the necessary funding? Past experience shows that the odds may be against it. For that reason, we have looked in a different direction for a solution. Once again, the reserve establishment may hold the key. Within the reserve structure, there is a great deal of C/E equipment. Of

special note is the number of critical, low-density items. We believe this equipment should be used to support deployed headquarters and liaison teams/elements.

Utilizing a battle roster system similar to the one associated with personnel, MEF and MARFOR equipment requirements could be satisfied. Specifically, equipment battle rosters could be developed for MEF/Force command elements which reflect the equipment and personnel necessary to support the headquarters and various liaison elements. In turn, specific equipage in the reserves would be identified with a given battle roster. When an FMF (MEF or Force) unit is scheduled for a joint operation, it would simply request its battle roster equipment. Logistical constraints will demand some type of linkage between battle rosters and the time-phased force and deployment data (TPFDD) for standing operations plans (OPLANS). Indexing equipment (by TPFDD) will facilitate both identification and embarkation. Although this recommendation may seem simplistic, we think it has great potential.

An additional note should be made here. Existing procedures for the transfer of reserve equipment to the regular establishment must be revised in order for this plan to work. It is our understanding that modifications of this sort are being implemeted at this time.(3)

CONCLUSION

By presenting an abridged version of USMC liaison operations in Southwest Asia, we hope to have raised the reader's awareness of traditional Marine Corps' strengths and weaknesses in this area. Various USMC initiatives to resolve the problems have been acknowledged. Together, they represent a step in the right direction. Our recommendations are aimed at refining those initiatives, not replacing them. In our estimate, they can be modified with little or no difficulty.

What is required first, however, is a desire on behalf of the Marine Corps leadership to go the extra distance. A sense of urgency should accompany these efforts. We were fortunate to have six months to establish our liaison system in SWA. Will we be afforded the same luxury in the next conflict?

With budget and force reductions looming on the horizon, joint operations will become the norm rather than the exception. Heretofore, the Marine Corps, could and did operate in a vacuum. In this new era, joint interoperability will be the key to success. An effective liaison system with supporting doctrine can facilitate interoperability. The time to devise and perfect such a system is now. The lives of Marines might depend upon it in the next conflict.

Type 1 Liaison Element. A type 1 liaison element is used when the tactical situation requires the element to possess a degree of autonomy and mobility. The element normally includes a liaison officer, a liaison chief, designated staff officers (appropriate for the task), clerical personnel/drivers, appropriate vehicles for tactical mobility, communications personnel with their equipment, automated data processing equipment, power sources, telephone switch connection, long haul and intra-cell radio communications, message center capability, translator capability, working accommodations, and habitability spaces.

Type 2 Liaison Element. A type 2 liaison element is used to establish contact with a less mobile yet robust component/JTF headquarters or host nation organization. The element would normally include a liaison officer, a liaison chief, designated staff officers (appropriate for the task), translator capability, clerical personnel/drivers, appropriate transportation, communications personnel with equipment, secure telephone capability, single channel radio communications, and limited automated data processing equipment support. An example would be the team that goes to the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC). The degree of autonomy required by a type 2 liaison element may not need to provide organic working accommodations and/or habitability spaces.

Type 3 Liaison Element. A type 3 liaison element is used to establish contact with a U.S. Federal Agency or other commands where the situation requires limited personnel to effect liaison and the existing facilities at the supported unit would all assimilation of the liaison element. An example of a type 3 would be a liaison officer to a host nation embassy. The liaison element would normally include a liaison officer with sufficient support to perform his duties. At a minimum, the element should possess secure telephone capability, automated data processing equipment, and organic transportation.

LIAISON CELLS
COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT

LEVEL 1: THE COMMUNICATION TEAM MUST HAVE THE ASSETS THAT WILL ALLOW THE CELL TO PROVIDE CONTINGENCY COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT TO MEET THE TEAMS CRITICAL NEEDS. THEY MUST BE ABLE TO INTERFACE WITH THE MAGTF COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM. AT A MINIMUM THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM SHOULD PROVIDE:

A) TELEPHONE SWITCH CONNECTION
B) LONG HAUL AND INTRA-CELL RADIO COMMUNICATIONS
C) MESSAGE CENTER CAPABILITY
D) AUTOMATED DATA PROCESSING EQUIPMENT (APDE) SUPPORT
E) ADEQUATE POWER SOURCES.

THIS TEAM SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH A WIDE RANGE OF DIFFERENCES/DIFFICULTIES, COMPATIBILITY OF EQUIPMENT AND INTEROPERABILITY OF COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS.

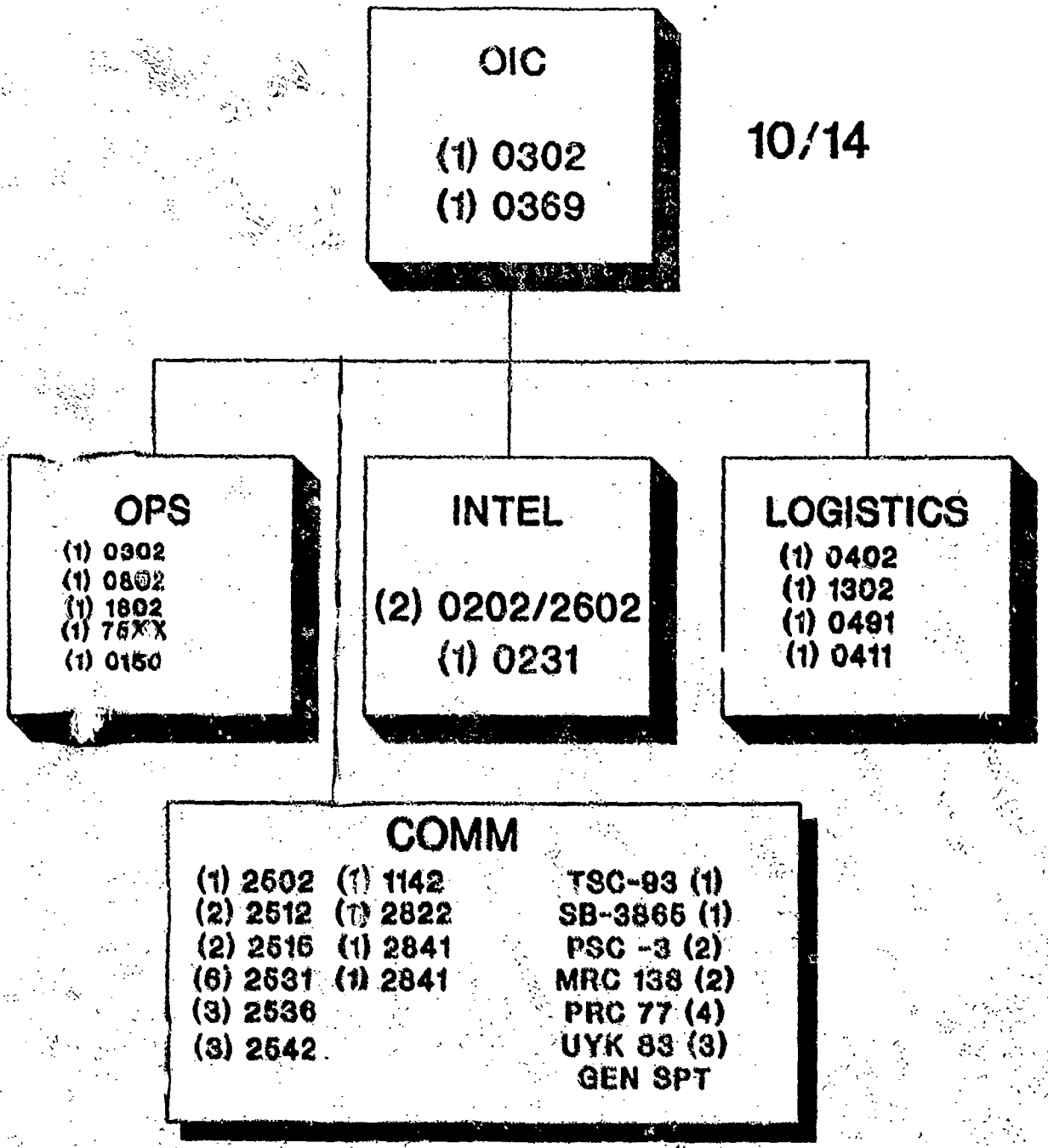
LEVEL 2: THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM MUST HAVE HIGHLY MOBILE AND TACTICAL COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT SUPPORT. THEY MUST BE ABLE TO PROVIDE COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN JOINT COMMANDS AND ANY ELEMENT OF THE MAGTF. THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM SHOULD PROVIDE:

A) SECURE TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS
B) SINGLE CHANNEL RADIO COMMUNICATIONS
C) LIMITED ADPE SUPPORT.

LEVEL 3: THE COMMUNICATIONS ASSET FOR THIS CELL ARE VERY LIMITED. THESE CELLS SHOULD BE ABLE TO USE EXISTING COMMUNICATIONS MEANS AT THEIR ASSIGNED LOCATIONS. AT A MINIMUM THESE CELLS SHOULD HAVE SECURE TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS AND ADPE SUPPORT.

APPENDIX A-3

LEVEL ONE


OIC
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(1) 0369
10/14
OPS
(1) 0302
(1) 0802
(1) 1802
(1) 75XX
(1) 0150
INTEL
(2) 0202/2602
(1) 0231
LOGISTICS
(1) 0402
(1) 1302
(1) 0491
(1) 0411
COMM
(1) 2502
(2) 2512
(2) 2515
(6) 2531
(3) 2536
(3) 2542
(1) 1142
(1) 2822
(1) 2841
(1) 2841
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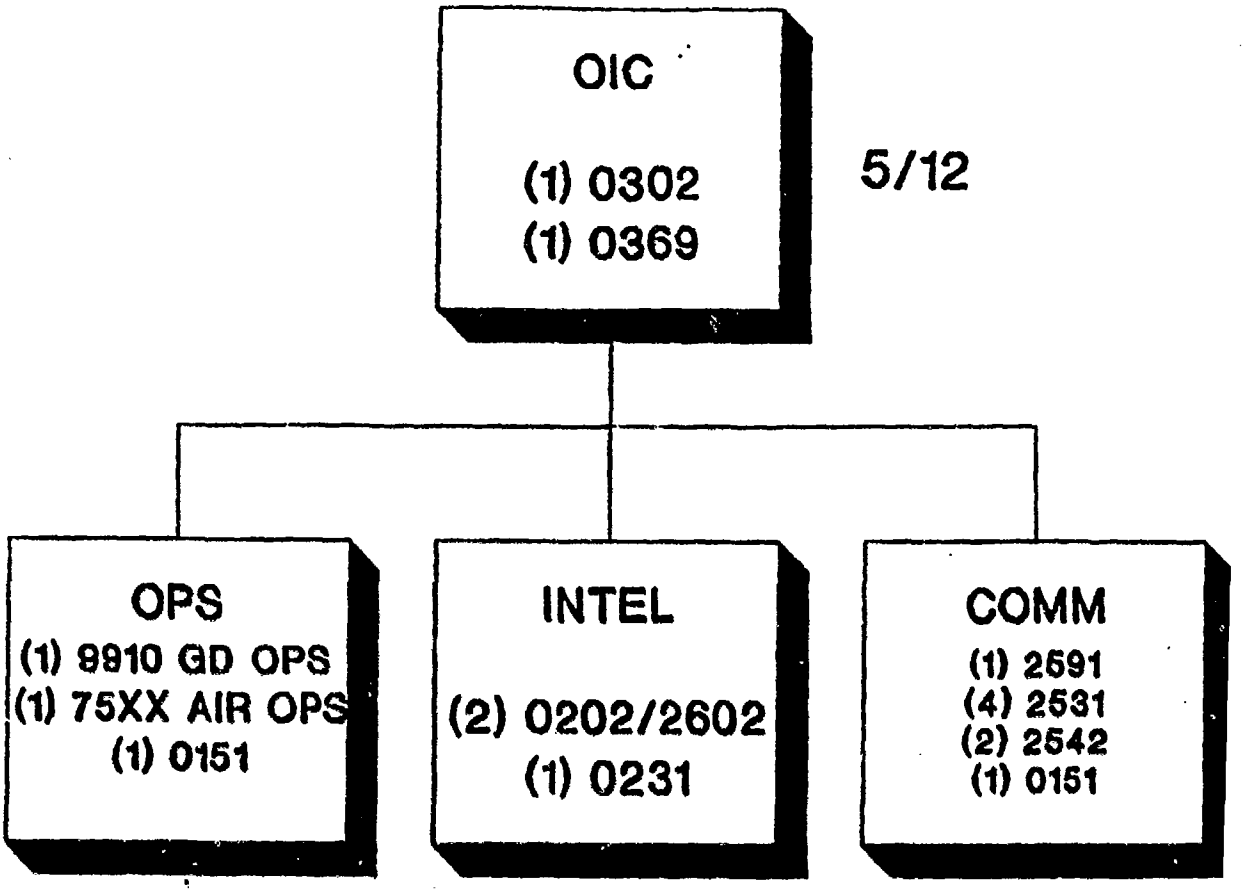
SB-3865 (1)
PSC -3 (2)
MRC 138 (2)
PRC 77 (4)
UYK 83 (3)
GEN SPT

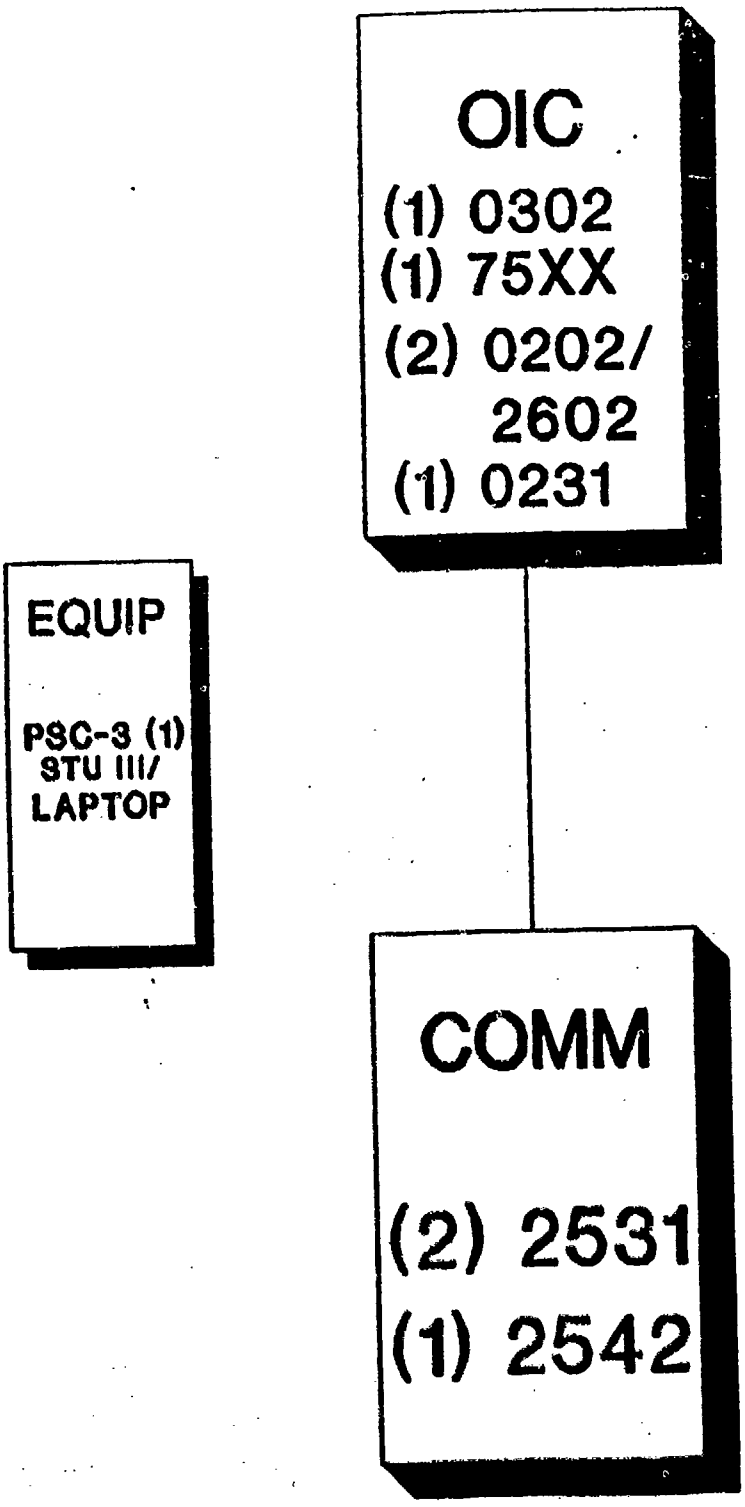
LEVEL TWO



COMM EQUIP

STU III/LAPTOP
PSC-3 (2)
MRC 138 (1)
LLYK 85 (1)

LEVEL THREE



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APPENDIX A-6

PROPOSED MEF COMMAND ELEMENT T/O RECAPITULATION

MEF CE
G-3

DESCRIPTION	OFF	ENL	STANDING	BATTLE ROSTER	TOTAL
AC/S G-3	1		1		1
ASST G-3	1		1		1
OPS CHF		1	1		1
ASST OPS CHF		1	1		1
COMMAND CTR					
COMM OFF	1		1		1
TACT OFF	1		1		1
OPS CHF		1	1		1
PLOTTERS		2	2		2
CURRENT OPS CTR					
OPS OFF	1		1		1
ACE LNO	2			2	2
OPS CHF		1		1	1
ASST OPS CHF		2		2	2
PLOTTERS		5	1	4	5
NBC OFF	3		1	2	3
NBC NCO		3	1	2	3
ENG OFF	2		1	1	2
ENG NCO		2	1	1	2
TERRAIN MGT	2		1	1	2
TERRAIN NCO		1	1		1
WATCH OFF	4			4	4
GROUND OFF	3		2	1	3
CLERKS		4	2	2	4
SPECIAL OPS (*)	2			2	2
FORCE FIRES COORD CTR					
FFC OFF	1		1		1
ASST FFC	1		1		1
TARGET INFO SEC					
TGT INF OFF	1		1		1
ASST TIO	2			2	2
TGT INFO CHF		1	1		1
ASST TIC		1		1	1
FILES CLERK		2	1	1	2
PLOTTER/CMPTR		2	1	1	2

DESCRIPTION	OFF	ENL	STANDING	BATTLE ROSTER	TOTAL
PLANS SECTION					1
PLANS OFF	1		1		1
NGF OFF (*)	1		1		2
FW AIR	2		1	1	2
PLANS CHF		2	1	1	
FIRES SECTION					1
FIRES OFF	1		1		2
ASST FO	2			2	1
NGF OFF (*)	1		1		2
ARTY OFF	2		1	1	2
FIRES CHF		2	1	1	2
CLERK		2	1	1	2
PLRS CLK		2	1	1	2
PLOTTERS		2	1	1	2
SCOUT OB/DRIVER		2	1	1	
AIR CENTER					1
G-3 AIR	1		1		1
ASST G-3	1		1		1
AIR DEFENSE	1		1		1
FW PLANNER	1			1	1
RW PLANNER	1		1		6
TAC PARTY	5		2	4	3
PLOTTERS		3	3		1
AIR CTL OFF	1			1	1
HAWK OFF	1			1	1
OPS CHF		1		1	1
JOURNAL CLERK		1		1	1
PLOTTER		1			
FUTURE OPS CTR					1
OPS OFF	1		1		1
ASST OPS OFF	1		1		1
FW AIR	1		1		1
RW AIR	1			1	1
OPS CHF		1	1		4
CLERKS		4	2	2	4
PSYOPS OFF	4		1	3	4
PSYOPS NCO		4	1	3	2
CIVIL AFF	2		1	1	2
GROUND EW	2		1	1	3
DECEPTION OFF	3		2	1	2
DECEPTION NCO		2	1	1	2
GROUND OFF	2		1		1
ARMOR OFF	1		1		

DESCRIPTION	OFF	ENL	STANDING	BATTLE ROSTER	TOTAL
LIAISON CENTER					
LIAISON OFF	30		5	25	30
LIAISON NCO		15		15	15
TACT EX SPT TM					
TACT EX SPT O	2		2		2
TACT SPT NCO		4	4		4
JFACC MARINE LIAISON					
COMMAND ELEMENT					
OIC	1			1	1
AVN BRANCH O	1			1	1
C3 BRANCH O	1			1	1
GROUND LN O	1			1	1
OPS CLERK		3		3	3
OPERATIONS					
FW EMP O	2			2	2
FW FRAGGER	2			2	2
AIR DEFENSE O	1			1	1
C3 PROJECT O	1			1	1
TARGETS					
TARGET O	3			3	3
TARGET NCO		1		1	1
TACC					
TAWO	2			2	2
WATCH O	2			2	2
TARGET O	2			2	2
SAR O	2			2	2
AWACS					
LIAISON O	4			4	4
ABCCC					
LIAISON O	5			5	5
	127	81	71	137	208
* USA/USN	4		2	2	4
	131	81	73	139	212

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